

February 14, 2005

Dear Friend of the Forest:

I am pleased to invite you to attend a public meeting and take part in developing forest management plans for your local state forests and parks. This includes:

Bryant Mountain State Forest	Gilbert A. Bliss State Forest
Dead Branch State Forest	Krug Sugar Bush State Forest
Becket State Forest	Chester-Blanford State Forest
C.M. Gardner State Park	Peru State Forest
Middlefield State Forest	Ashmere Lake State Park
Worthington State Forest	October Mountain State Forest
Laurel Lake Boat Ramp	Huntington State Forest

A meeting will be held at **6:30 p.m. on February 24th, 2005 at the Berkshires Regional Headquarters (South Mountain), 740 South Street, Pittsfield MA.**

This meeting will accomplish a number of important objectives. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Bureau of Forestry staff will explain and elaborate the reasons why management planning is needed for our state forests, and ask for your preliminary comments, concerns, questions and ideas. Our planning efforts will encompass:

- Creation of management zones in each forest to determine how areas will be managed, the type of uses allowed, and at what level of intensity. Zoning includes the identification of areas that will not be managed for timber.
- Identifying resource issues including recreation, management goals and objectives, and performance standards.
- Maintenance or enhancement of quality wildlife habitat, with special attention to rare and endangered species
- Providing responsible, quality natural resource recreational opportunities and settings
- Protection of existing historical and cultural resources and forest aesthetics, particularly in areas that also support hiking and camping

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Governor

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LT. Governor

ELLEN ROY HERZFELDER
Secretary-EOEA

KATHERINE F. ABBOTT
Commissioner



- Use and demonstration of sound silvicultural practices, particularly as applied to long-term forest health
- Restoration of former plantations to native plant communities
- Protection of aquifer areas for high water quality while appropriately managing for wood products
- Protection of soil productivity and integrity against compaction and erosion
- Control and mitigation of the effects of insects, diseases, and invasive, exotic plant species

Massachusetts needs modern, systematic forest management planning. State law already requires management planning on all forestland owned by state agencies and departments. In addition, the Commonwealth recently received Green Certification for all of the state's forests. This certification says that wood and wood products from state forests must be grown and harvested in a sustainable way. Maintaining our certification requires the development of management plans that will explore and catalog our resources and direct their wise and sustainable use over time.

We have many good reasons to wisely manage our state forests, and the public can contribute to the planning process in a number of important ways. Participants will have a chance to ask general and specific questions about the planning process, learn more about forest management and how and why we harvest trees, and share information or voice concerns about favorite state forests or the commonwealth's forests in general. DCR is seeking public participation in a number of key aspects of the planning process. In particular, we welcome input from the citizens of the commonwealth to:

1. Establish the size and location of reserves, that is, areas where no active management will be carried out.
2. Determine the appropriate level of intensity of management and use on a given forest area
3. Share creative ideas about how specific forest areas might be managed

All of our forests deserve thoughtful and far-sighted plans that emphasize overall forest health and the establishment of native species suitable to the growing site. The state forests are not intended to be intensively managed timberlands; rather, we seek to maintain a balance between ecological, economic sustainability, and appropriate harvesting that will develop or maintain both a quality supply of timber products and a living, functioning forest.

I hope that everyone who has a general interest in maintaining and enhancing the health and beauty of our forests, who has information on a particular forest that is dear to them, has concerns about a particular forest or who might like to learn more about general forestry and the sustainable use of these richly diverse resource areas, will try to attend this meeting. We are at an important crossroads in state forest management, and I look forward to sharing the opportunities and the excitement with each of you.

Public comments are being accepted at the meeting and through **March 10, 2005** by submitting your comments to: Kris Massini, DCR-Bureau of Forestry, PO Box 1433 Pittsfield, MA 01202, (413)442-8928 ext 33 or via e-mail: kris.massini@state.ma.us

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen R. Pritchard".

Stephen R. Pritchard
Acting Commissioner
Department of Conservation and Recreation

Cc: Bob Mellace
Jim Rassman
Pat Swain
Kris Massini
Leslie Luchonok
Priscilla Geigis
Jim DiMaio